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Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

International efforts to ensure sustainable agriculture development and food security continue to address the challenges of malnutrition, poverty and gender inequality, while adapting to the challenges posed by shifting markets, environmental pressures and climate change. There is an emerging consensus within the international community that actions along multiple dimensions are required to ensure food security. Those dimensions include food production, trade, access, consumption and utilization. Acting on them comprehensively is essential to ensure that linkages between food security and nutrition and various parts of the sustainable development agenda are addressed. Such multidimensionality and linkages signal the need to promote a holistic notion of food systems and to acknowledge the challenges confronting food systems in the current global environment.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 67/228 on agriculture development and food security, the General Assembly, among other things, requested that the Secretary-General report to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on matters highlighted therein, including implementation of national, regional and international development policies, taking into account the importance of enhancing synergies among sustainable agriculture practices, biodiversity, food security and nutrition. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. Food security and nutrition are essential dimensions of sustainable development. Inadequate food security and nutrition take an enormous toll on economies and have negative consequences for the livelihoods and economic capabilities of vulnerable populations. A world in which all enjoy freedom from want and progressively realize their right to adequate food and nutrition can be realized only through far-reaching changes, supported by policies and programmes promoting sustainable development in all dimensions. Increasing agricultural production to meet the nutritional needs of a growing world population in a sustainable manner is at the centre of such a transformation and at the heart of poverty eradication.

3. In 1992, Member States adopted Agenda 21,[1] declaring that "major adjustments are needed in agricultural, environmental and macroeconomic policy, at both national and international levels, in developed as well as developing countries, to create the conditions for sustainable agriculture and rural development". Twenty years later, although significant progress has been made in advancing awareness and the implementation of policies for sustainable agriculture, hunger and malnutrition persist. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, world leaders reaffirmed the need to "promote, enhance and support more sustainable agriculture ... that improves food security, eradicates hunger and is economically viable, while conserving land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, biodiversity and ecosystems and enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters".[2]

4. The present report examines the progress and challenges to date in achieving food and nutrition security and provides an overview of progress in implementing sustainable agricultural policies in line with the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and international agreements that guide the implementation of policies on sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition. Key messages from the coordination team for the Secretary-General's High-level Task Force on Global Food Security, as well as reports of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and other sources, have provided content.

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Resolution 66/288, annex, para. 111.

II. Current challenges to agriculture development and food security in the world

5. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012*[3] presents new estimates of undernourishment based on a revised and improved methodology. The new estimates show that progress in reducing hunger during the past 20 years has been better than previously believed and that, given renewed efforts, it may be possible to reach the Millennium Development Goals target of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015. With 868 million people suffering from chronic undernourishment, however, the number remains unacceptably high and eradication of hunger continues to pose a major global challenge. Furthermore, this number represents only a fraction of the global burden of malnutrition. An estimated 26 per cent of the world's children are stunted and 2 billion people suffer from one or more micronutrient deficiencies.[4]

6. Underlining the fact that strong political leadership and appropriate policies can produce dramatic reductions in levels of hunger and malnutrition, FAO recently announced that 38 countries had already halved either the number or the percentage of hungry people ahead of the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Much of the activity involves cooperation among developing countries. Significant progress has been made since 1990 to reduce rates of undernourishment, child stunting, underweight, micronutrient deficiencies and child mortality.[5] Progress has, however, been uneven and subject to setbacks caused by food price increases, conflict and other shocks, in particular since 2007.[6]

A. Economic situation

7. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and FAO, on their website for the *Agricultural Outlook 2013-2022* (www.agri-outlook.org), report that agriculture has been turned into an increasingly market-driven sector, as opposed to a policy-driven sector as in the past. This shift offers developing countries important investment opportunities and economic benefits, given their growing food demand, the potential for expansion of production and their comparative advantage in many global markets. Production shortfalls, price volatility and trade disruption remain a threat to global food security, however. The report warns that, as long as food stocks in major producing and consuming countries remain low, the risk of price volatility is amplified. A widespread drought, such as that experienced in 2012, on top of low food stocks, could raise world prices by 15 to 40 per cent.

8. The FAO food price index remains somewhat volatile, averaging 211.3 points in June 2013, nearly 11 points higher than the previous year, but below the peak of

[3] FAO, WFP and IFAD, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012. Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition* (Rome, FAO, 2012).

[4] FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2013. Food systems for better nutrition* (Rome, 2013).

[5] FAO, WFP and IFAD, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012*.

[6] Technical Support Team of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, "Issues brief on food security and nutrition", May 2013.

238 in February 2011.[7] World cereal production is forecast to increase by about 7 per cent in 2013, helping to replenish global inventories and raising expectations for more stable markets in 2013-2014. International prices of wheat declined slightly with the onset of the 2013 harvests in the northern hemisphere, while maize prices increased, supported by continued tight global supplies. Export prices of rice showed mixed trends.[8]

9. In its *2012 Global Food Policy Report*, the International Food Policy Research Institute notes that a number of driving forces are exerting pressure on food production, consumption and markets: rising incomes and rapid urbanization in many developing countries are changing the composition of food demand and energy markets are having a greater impact on food security as a result of growing biofuel markets and the increasing share of energy in agricultural costs. In addition, calls for more investment in agricultural research and development may spur advances in agricultural productivity that will also affect food systems.[9]

10. The Institute's international model for policy analysis of agricultural commodities and trade can be used to project future scenarios using various policies and other conditions, such as population, investment and trade scenarios. Researchers have used it to look specifically at what could happen to food prices and food security if the world achieves higher agricultural productivity, experiences higher energy prices or lowers demand for meat. The results show that policy choices that lead to higher energy prices could lead to food prices becoming even higher and more volatile than they have been in recent years. Increasing agricultural productivity, however, by expanding public and private investment would lower food prices, lead to higher agricultural production and result in greater food security. Changes in dietary patterns, productivity growth and the energy policies of emerging countries — namely Brazil, China and India — have an especially large impact on future food security outcomes, given the significant roles of these countries as producers and consumers.[10]

B. Environmental pressures

11. The impact of agriculture on the environment is well documented. Greenhouse-gas emissions, biodiversity loss, nitrogen and phosphorus overuse and ocean acidification have reached alarming levels. More than 60 per cent of the world's major ecosystem goods and services are being degraded or used unsustainably, due in part to prevailing agricultural practices, while the genetic diversity of crops, breeds, trees and aquatic resources on which agriculture depends is increasingly at risk. Today, just three crops — wheat, maize and rice — supply more than half of humanity's calories.

[7] The FAO food price index is a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities. It consists of the average of five commodity group price indices (representing 55 quotations), weighted with the average export shares of each of the groups for 2002-2004.

[8] FAO Global Information and Early Warning System, "Crop prospects and food situation", No. 2, July 2013.

[9] Available from www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/gfpr2012.pdf.

[10] International Food Policy Research Institute, *2012 Global Food Policy Report* (Washington, D.C., 2012). Available from www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/gfpr2012.pdf.

12. Since around 1950, the acceleration of industrialization and human development has imposed steadily increasing pressure on the biophysical Earth systems. Depletion of finite natural resources, combined with a decreasing capacity of ecosystems to absorb the waste of human activity, has prompted scientists and policymakers to identify and quantify "planetary boundaries" within which humanity can exist without causing irreparable environmental damage.[11] Planetary boundaries have already been exceeded in the areas of climate change, nitrogen and phosphorus cycles and biodiversity loss; in particular, climate projections based on existing data forecast a global mean surface warming of more than 2° C becoming the norm by 2060.[12]

13. The agricultural sector is more adversely affected by unpredictable and extreme effects of climate change than any other.[13] Higher average temperatures will accelerate the growth and development of plants. Most livestock species have comfort zones between 10° C and 30° C and, at temperatures above this, animals reduce their feed intake by 3 to 5 per cent per additional degree of temperature. In addition to reducing animal production, higher temperatures negatively affect fertility. Dryland agriculture in arid and semi-arid regions, where more than 40 per cent of the world's population and more than 650 million of the poorest and most food-insecure people live, is particularly vulnerable to the risks of climate change and variability and drought in particular. In some regions of the world, significant agricultural production takes place in low-lying coastal areas and where current population densities are high. In these regions, and in particular in small island States, a major threat of climate change is from saline intrusion, sea-level rise and increased flooding.[14]

14. These impacts, coupled with the decreasing availability of fresh water and increased land degradation and deforestation, in addition to inadequate policies to respond to these issues, are undermining the livelihoods of ever-growing numbers of people, especially rural people and those who live in extreme poverty. The degradation of ecosystems, depletion of biodiversity and the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations, for they are the most likely to rely upon subsistence agriculture and often lack the coverage of social protection and safety nets to buffer the impact of drought, floods and other shocks.

C. Socioeconomic context

15. Demographic and social issues, including insufficient attention paid to the particular nutritional vulnerabilities of women and children, population growth, urbanization and rural-urban migration, growing inequalities between population groups within countries, inadequate or ineffective social protection systems and safety nets and discrimination against vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, often prevent progress in overcoming hunger and malnutrition. Recent

[11] Johan Rockstrom and others, "A safe operating space for humanity", *Nature*, vol. 461 (September 2009).

[12] David Griggs and others, "Sustainable development goals for people and planet", *Nature*, vol. 495 (March 2013).

[13] Technical Support Team of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, "Issues brief on sustainable agriculture".

[14] High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, *Food Security and Climate Change* (Rome, FAO, 2012).

efforts have significantly lowered the percentage of children under 5 years of age who are stunted (low height-for-age), underweight (low weight-for-age) or wasted (low weight-for-height). However, major regional disparities exist: in sub-Saharan Africa, 36 per cent of children under 5 years of age are stunted and in Asia the corresponding figure is 27 per cent.[15]

16. In addition, governance structures do not always support efforts to increase food security, e.g. where there is conflict, lack of political will, incoherent policies and programmes and lack of services in rural areas. High unemployment, unequal distribution of productive resources, insecure land tenure, in particular for women farmers, insufficient national investment in the agricultural sector and lack of access to markets are all problems that negatively affect the ability of a country to ensure food security for its people.[16] Smallholder and family farmers often bear disproportionately the weight of such institutional and policy problems. Inadequate disaster preparedness and response also affect all dimensions of food security. The food insecure, many of whom live in marginal areas, are disproportionately exposed to natural hazards and are the least able to cope with their effects.[17]

17. According to the Agricultural Market Information System in July 2013, adjustments were recently made to domestic policies in several countries: a cut in the support price for rice was announced in Thailand; in Egypt the Government purchased domestic wheat; and a release of government grain stocks was approved in India and the Russian Federation. In Viet Nam, interest-free loans were granted to support private stockholding of rice, while progress was made in implementing the Indonesian intervention mechanism for soybean with the establishment of a price stabilization programme.

18. With regard to export measures, India deferred a decision to allow additional exports of wheat and the export price floor for 35 per cent broken rice was cut in Viet Nam. To respond to import measures that followed the discovery of genetically modified wheat in Oregon, United States of America, the United States Department of Agriculture provided trading partners with a DNA test method to detect the specific genetically modified variety. The European Union will resume import duties on medium-quality wheat and other cereals from 1 July.[18]

19. Global production of biofuels has increased fivefold over the past decade, from less than 20 billion litres per year in 2001 to more than 100 billion litres per year in 2011. When crops are used as biofuels, the availability of crops for food and feed may be reduced, inducing an increase in prices and a reduction in the capacity of the system to meet food demand by the poor. While it can also encourage farmers to produce more, whether this happens depends on the mix of incentives, risks and costs faced by farmers. There is often a substitution effect at both the consumption

[15] United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization and World Bank joint child malnutrition estimates, "Levels and trends in child malnutrition" (New York, Geneva and Washington, D.C., 2011). Available from www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/estimates/en/index.html.

[16] See Committee on World Food Security, "Global strategic framework for food security and nutrition", September 2012.

[17] Technical Support Team of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, "Issues brief on sustainable agriculture".

[18] Agricultural Market Information System, *Market Monitor No. 10*, July 2013. Available from www.amis-outlook.org/fileadmin/user_upload/amis/docs/Market_monitor/AMIS_Market_Monitor_current.pdf .

and the production levels, which is one reason why price increases spread to other crops.[19]

III. Efforts and progress in fostering coordination and cooperation at all levels

20. Much work has been undertaken at the international level to overcome the challenges of hunger and malnutrition by increasing cooperation and coordination.

A. Zero Hunger Challenge

21. The Zero Hunger Challenge, launched by the Secretary-General in June 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, expresses a vision for a future free from hunger, where all people have access to adequate food at all times; no children suffer from chronic malnutrition (stunting); all systems for food production and processing are sustainable; smallholder productivity and income doubles; and waste or loss of food is eliminated through sustainable production and consumption.

22. One year later, programmes in line with the Challenge are taking shape in 16 countries in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Antigua and Barbuda, Mexico and Pakistan recently announced plans to launch Zero Hunger programmes with the help of national and international partners and politicians in London and Mexico City have declared their intention to become "zero hunger cities".

23. The Challenge has also been adopted collectively by the 23 multilateral organizations that make up the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. These agencies are providing support to a number of initiatives and organizations, including hunger-free initiatives for West Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, the African Union, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In April 2013, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations helped to launch the Challenge in Bangkok at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Parliaments in 14 countries in Latin America and the European Parliament now have multiparty groups in support of reducing hunger.

24. The Challenge aims to unite those who are working for food security and an end to hunger, encourage them to identify how they can contribute effectively and stimulate the scaling-up of collective efforts. It builds on the comprehensive approach to food and nutrition security that has been pursued in the United Nations system since 2008, through resolutions of the General Assembly, initiatives undertaken by the Committee on World Food Security and the comprehensive framework for action developed by the High-Level Task Force. The Challenge is aspirational and an invitation to action — a vision that may lend inspiration to discussions under way among Member States and others on the development agenda beyond 2015, or on possible sustainable development goals, without pre-empting their discussions or limiting what Member States may choose as collective goals.

[19] High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, *Biofuels and food security* (Rome, FAO, 2013).

25. There are many pathways to achieving the Challenge. To date, local and national initiatives have led the way, usually initiated by Governments, mayors or non-governmental organizations, with the support of numerous civil society, farmer and consumer organizations, businesses and parliamentarians. There is also ample scope for committed individuals to champion the Challenge, backed by regional political bodies, non-governmental organizations, businesses and international organizations, including the United Nations system, which is realigning its efforts around the Challenge in order to give more effective and coherent support to country-led initiatives.

B. "Scaling Up Nutrition" movement

26. Food security and nutrition are multidimensional issues that go beyond calorie intake. Malnutrition — whether in the form of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies or excessive weight and obesity — is caused by a complex interplay of economic, social, environmental and behavioural factors that prevent people from consuming and fully benefiting from healthy diets.[20] Tackling these problems requires a comprehensive agenda involving food production, quality and diversity, incomes and access to food, utilization and consumption and access to health care, water, sanitation and education.

27. The "Scaling Up Nutrition" movement encourages increased political commitment and programmatic alignment to reduce global hunger and undernutrition, with an emphasis on tackling undernutrition in women, especially pregnant and lactating women, and children under 2 years of age. Malnutrition during the 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday requires particular attention and dedicated strategies.

28. Since it was launched in 2010, 41 countries have joined the movement; 30 have established platforms that bring people together and have appointed a government representative; 20 report having updated and budgeted nutrition plans; and 15 are reducing stunting at an annual rate of 2 per cent and above. More than 100 global stakeholders are providing support to these countries, with the opportunity to reach 81 million stunted children.[21]

29. According to the movement, the key to fighting malnutrition lies in addressing both the immediate needs of populations that are vulnerable to malnutrition and the underlying determinants of undernutrition, such as poverty, by designing broad development programmes that are sensitive to nutrition. When agriculture, social protection, early child development, education, water and sanitation and other programmes address nutrition, they deal with the wider drivers of malnutrition, such as income, food security, women's empowerment and diet quality, offering significant benefits for improving nutrition and lives. Such broad, nutrition-sensitive programmes can also be vehicles for more direct action, such as ensuring that schools offer nutrition as a subject in their curricula.

30. Overcoming the multiple effects of malnutrition requires people to work together across issues and sectors to include nutrition in all development efforts. The "Scaling Up Nutrition" movement recognizes that the causes of malnutrition

[20] FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2013*.

[21] Details on the movement and participating countries are available from http://scalingupnutrition.org.

include not only factors that most people would generally associate with nutrition but also factors that affect the broader context of life and health. It looks to implement both specific nutrition interventions and nutrition-sensitive approaches. Specific nutrition interventions include support for exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of age and continued breastfeeding, together with appropriate and nutritious food, up to 2 years of age; fortification of foods; micronutrient supplementation; and treatment of severe malnutrition.

31. These nutrition-sensitive approaches embrace the interlinkages between nutrition and other related issues, including making nutritious food more accessible to everyone and supporting small farms as a source of income and food; improving access to clean water and sanitation to reduce infection and disease; ensuring that children have sufficient energy to obtain an education and earn an adequate income as adults; improving access to health-care services to ensure that women and children remain healthy; establishing a stronger, healthier population and sustained prosperity to increase resilience and better endure emergencies and conflicts; and, most importantly, empowering women to be leaders in their families and communities.

32. Agricultural research must therefore continue to enhance productivity, while paying greater attention to foods that are dense in nutrients, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes and animal products, and to more sustainable production systems. Production interventions are more effective when they are sensitive to gender roles and combined with nutrition education. Improvements in traditional supply chains can help to reduce losses, lower prices and increase diversity of choice for lower-income households. The growth of modern retailing and food processing can facilitate the use of fortification to combat malnutrition, but the increased availability of highly processed, packaged goods may contribute to overweight and obesity.[22] Moreover, modern supply chains do not always offer easy access for small farms, many of which produce the majority of food in developing countries, and this may have a negative impact on farmers' own nutrition.

C. New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme

33. With the support of the international community, Africa is leading the implementation of a number of programmes under the New Partnership for Africa's Development and in particular the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

34. In 2013, members of the Group of Eight reaffirmed, in the Lough Erne communiqué, their commitment to responding with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food and nutrition security, recognizing the critical role played by smallholder farmers, especially women. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme as the guiding framework for agricultural transformation in Africa and welcomed the establishment of a robust system to track results integrated into the monitoring framework of the Programme.

[22] FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2013*.

35. The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition was launched at the Group of Eight meeting in 2012 as a means to increase private-sector investment in support of the country investment plans of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. The New Alliance is aligned with the Programme and uses the approach of "Grow Africa", which is based on the initiative of the World Economic Forum for a new vision for agriculture.[23] The stated goal is to bring the private sector to the table by creating an enabling environment for businesses and farmers to boost productivity and thereby increase the incomes of African smallholder farmers.

36. The 2013 progress report on the New Alliance highlights the implementation of policy reforms and efforts to catalyse private-sector investment, in addition to the launch of tools to mobilize capital, improve access to new technology, manage risk and improve nutrition. Benin, Malawi and Nigeria are active in the New Alliance and initial steps have been taken to develop a new cooperation framework with Senegal.

37. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, set up in 2010 by the international community for channelling long-term investments in food security and nutrition in an effective way, received pledges of $1.3 billion in 2013 ($940.8 million to its public sector window, $308.7 million to the private sector window and $68.5 million pending allocation).

38. The Program has allocated $658 million to country-led programmes in 18 countries: Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Haiti, the Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, Mongolia, Nepal, the Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania. In June 2013, the third call for proposals by the Program closed, with 20 countries submitting plans requesting a total of $732.8 million.

D. Committee on World Food Security

39. The Committee on World Food Security is a key organ in addressing the issue of global food security. As part of the reform of the Committee in 2009, a joint FAO, IFAD and WFP secretariat, a multi-stakeholder advisory group and a high-level panel of experts on food security and nutrition were established to assess and analyse the current state of food security and nutrition and its underlying causes; provide scientific and knowledge-based analysis and advice on specific policy issues, utilizing existing high-quality research, data and technical studies; identify emerging issues; and help members to prioritize future actions in, and direct attention to, key focal areas.

40. The High-Level Panel received its mandate from the Committee on World Food Security and reports to it. It produces its reports, recommendations and advice independently from governmental positions, in order to inform and nourish the debate with comprehensive analysis and advice. It has a two-tier structure: a steering committee composed of 15 internationally recognized experts in a variety of fields relating to food security and nutrition and project teams acting on a project-specific basis, selected and managed by the steering committee to report on specific issues.

[23] See www.weforum.org/issues/agriculture-and-food-security#nva.

41. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in May 2012, serve as a reference for and provide guidance on improving the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests with the overarching goal of achieving food security for all and supporting the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. They are consistent with, and draw on, international and regional instruments, including the Millennium Development Goals, that address human rights and rights of tenure. For those seeking to improve tenure governance, the Guidelines encourage regular review of such instruments for their applicable obligations and voluntary commitments.

42. In June 2013, the leaders of the Group of Eight welcomed the Guidelines and pledged to support greater transparency in land transactions, including in the early stages, and increase the capacity to develop good land governance systems in developing countries. To support regional processes such as the land policy initiative of the African Union, they announced the establishment of partnerships with Burkina Faso (United States), Namibia (Germany), Nigeria (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the Niger (European Union), Senegal (France), South Sudan (European Union) and the United Republic of Tanzania (United Kingdom) to accelerate and target support to existing land governance programmes in conjunction with businesses, in particular farmers, and civil society. That support will be tailored to the needs of each country and its national development plans with the objective of improving land governance, in particular transparency in land transactions, by 2015. In addition, Italy and Japan are providing increased support through FAO and the World Bank to support the implementation of the Guidelines in developing countries.

43. The Committee on World Food Security is developing, through an inclusive consultation process to ensure broad ownership, a set of principles to promote responsible investment in agriculture in the context of food security and nutrition. The principles take into account existing guidance frameworks and build on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security. They will address all types of investment in agricultural value chains and food systems including by, for and with smallholder producers and investments in agricultural research, extension and technology transfer. They will also encompass foreign and domestic, public and private small-scale, medium-scale and large-scale investments.

44. This process follows the proposals of the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment that Respects Rights, Livelihoods and Resources, developed by FAO, IFAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Bank, and is unfolding in close cooperation with the process for developing business principles for sustainable agriculture being undertaken by the United Nations Global Compact.

IV. Progress in implementing the twin-track approach

45. The updated comprehensive framework for action of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis is a coordinated approach throughout the United Nations system for supporting country action that aims for sustainable and resilient rural livelihoods and food and nutrition security for all. Efforts to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security are inspired and guided by 10 principles:

(a) Twin tracks to food and nutrition security;

(b) Need for a comprehensive approach;

(c) Smallholders, especially women, at the centre of actions;

(d) Increased focus on the resilience of household livelihoods;

(e) More and better investments in food and nutrition security;

(f) Importance of open and well-functioning markets and trade;

(g) Value of multi-stakeholder and multisectoral partnerships;

(h) Sustained political commitment and good governance;

(i) Strategies led by countries with regional support;

(j) Accountability for results.

46. The comprehensive twin-track approach to food security and nutrition security consists of direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable and longer-term actions to support the development of sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition; and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty, including through the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

47. Achieving food and nutrition security requires structural changes throughout food systems, from production to consumption. Key aspects include increasing agricultural productivity, sustainability, cutting food loss and waste, mitigating the impact of food price spikes and volatility, promoting nutritious diets and building resilience to shocks. An enabling policy environment for responsible investment in the development of rural sectors, including food markets and supply chains, is essential for progress. Social protection systems are also critical.

A. Short-term security measures

48. Social protection is an important element of many national strategies to reduce malnutrition. This includes specific programmes designed to address the nutritional needs of women of childbearing age, pregnant women and lactating mothers. In addition, social protection measures, including social protection floor initiatives, are increasingly seen as integral to strategies to promote growth and investment. Integrated social protection programmes with explicit food security and nutrition objectives have been promoted in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Mexico, although their impact on nutrition is not always directly evident.

49. Conditional cash transfers have demonstrated that positive impacts on nutrition require a multidimensional approach. Examples include programmes that promote

health care, education and women's empowerment. Unconditional cash transfers have also been found to have positive impacts on reducing stunting in some countries, such as Ecuador and South Africa. Research shows that safety net programmes need to combine different approaches (e.g. cash plus food) to respond to different circumstances (e.g. local food supply capacity).[24] Through the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger, Brazil has shared its successful *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) experience in improving national school meal programmes, family agriculture and food distribution.

50. In 2012, WFP distributed 3.5 million tons of food, assisting more than 97.2 million people in 80 countries and responding to hunger crises in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the Sahel region.

51. The FAO Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture continuously monitors crop prospects and the food security situation at the global, regional, national and subnational levels and warns of impending food difficulties and emergencies. It maintains a unique database on all aspects of food supply and demand for every country and aims to regularly provide policymakers and the international community with up-to-date information, so that timely interventions can be planned and suffering avoided.

52. The Global Alliance for Resilience initiative for the Sahel region aims to promote greater resilience among vulnerable populations in the Sahel by creating greater synergy between emergency actions and long-term strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of food crises, in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States, the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel.

B. Ensuring sustainable agriculture and food security in the long term

53. International, regional and national efforts are under way to strengthen the capacity of developing countries, in particular their small-scale producers, in order to enhance the production, productivity and nutritional quality of food crops and to promote sustainable practices in pre-harvest and post-harvest agricultural activities.

54. Gender equality and women's empowerment must provide the cornerstone of these food security and nutrition strategies. Women have multiple roles in ensuring that food security and adequate nutrition and gender inequalities are recognized as a major factor undermining progress. The gender gap persists for many assets, inputs and services. Women need equal access to productive resources, income opportunities, education, credit services and social protection to ensure positive impacts on food security and sustainable agriculture.

55. Governments have been urged to invest in and strengthen efforts to meet the basic needs of rural women, including those relating to their food and nutritional security and that of their families, and to promote adequate standards of living for them, decent conditions of work and access to local, regional and global markets. Continued progress is needed in the growth of agricultural cooperatives through

[24] See Technical Support Team of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, "Issues brief on food security and nutrition".

easy access to affordable finance, the adoption of sustainable production techniques, investment in rural infrastructure and irrigation, strengthened marketing mechanisms and support for the participation of women in economic activities.

56. Sustainable agricultural intensification must be based on a variety of techniques that are widely known but not all widely practised, including conservation tillage, the use of organic fertilizers, natural pest control, the use and sharing of traditional as well as improved seed varieties, integrated soil, water and plant management, crop rotation and intercropping, including with agroforestry systems. One positive aspect is that these techniques generally draw on knowledge that is in the public domain, including the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and other farming and pastoralist communities. Knowledge-sharing, especially between farmers, is vital to their wide dissemination.

57. Challenges faced by indigenous peoples in the context of food security require States to take special actions to combat the root causes of the disproportionately high level of hunger and malnutrition among indigenous peoples. In its resolution 66/221, the General Assembly designated 2013 as the International Year of Quinoa and encouraged all Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the Year as a way of promoting the traditional knowledge of the Andean and other indigenous peoples; contributing to the achievement of food security, nutrition and poverty eradication and raising awareness of their contribution to social, economic and environmental development; and sharing good practices on the implementation of activities during the Year, as indicated in the master plan of activities (A/67/553, appendix).

58. The International Year of Quinoa has focused global attention on the biodiversity and nutritional value of quinoa and increased the visibility of its potential to contribute to global food security, especially in countries where the population has no access to other protein sources or where production conditions are limiting. Quinoa is the only plant food that contains all the essential amino acids, vitamins and trace elements and can therefore make an important contribution to food security, nutrition and poverty eradication. It is extraordinarily adaptable to various agroecological floors, is also a water-efficient crop and is tolerant of and resistant to lack of soil moisture.

59. Technical and policy frameworks for the conservation and sustainable use of quinoa diversity worldwide, partnerships to promote the cultivation of quinoa and efforts to recognize the contribution of the indigenous peoples of the Andes are broadening global awareness of the importance of developing sustainable production systems (ibid., p. 8).

60. The impact of biofuels has been debated in several forums and is on the agenda for the fortieth session of the Committee on World Food Security, in October 2013. The supporters of biofuels consider them a critical tool in reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and mitigating the effects of climate change. Biofuel critics say that using food crops such as maize and soybeans to produce fuel rather than food increases global food prices and contributes to hunger and food insecurity.

61. Climate-sensitive agricultural practices aimed at building the resilience of vulnerable groups and food systems, including through agroforestry, conservation agriculture, water management schemes, drought-resistant and flood-resistant seeds and sustainable livestock management, can also have a wider positive impact,

emphasizing adaptation and mitigation to climate change as a major concern and objective for all farmers and food producers, especially small-scale producers.

62. The issue of reducing loss and waste is one of the five objectives of the Zero Hunger Challenge. While there is more than enough food being produced globally to meet the nutritional needs of all, tremendous amounts of food are lost and wasted in the process of production and at the consumption stage. These are problems that the international community has agreed to seek to tackle more thoroughly — the former through improved post-harvest handling and storage in developing countries, the latter mostly through changing consumption patterns in developed countries. Eliminating, or substantially reducing, loss and waste could greatly augment the available food supply, helping to answer the question of how the world will feed another 2 billion people in the coming decades without additional deforestation and further land degradation.

63. Many countries aspire to establish alternative patterns of food production and consumption rooted in the three dimensions of sustainability, with ambitious targets for reducing post-harvest losses or waste, in addition to employing alternative mechanisms of governance for agricultural, nutritional and food systems, which are of universal although differentiated relevance. Such a transformative approach gained support at a high-level event for the United Nations Development Group global thematic consultation on hunger, food security and nutrition in the framework of the development agenda beyond 2015, which was held in Madrid in April 2013.[25]

64. Progress has also been seen through the "Think.Eat.Save. Reduce Your Foodprint" initiative, which aims to reduce food waste and loss and is supported by FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme, among others. In 2013, World Environment Day inspired people to save food through events in more than 150 countries.

65. Consumers ultimately determine what they eat and therefore what the food system produces. Governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society can, however, all help consumers to make healthier decisions, reduce waste and contribute to the sustainable use of resources by providing clear, accurate information and ensuring access to diverse and nutritious foods.

66. Better governance of food systems at all levels, facilitated by high-level political support, is needed to build a common vision, to support evidence-based policies and to promote effective coordination and collaboration through integrated multisectoral action.

V. Progress in ensuring means of implementation

67. Food security and nutrition is a global challenge and a national policy responsibility. Any plans for addressing food security challenges and the eradication of poverty in relation to food security must be nationally articulated, designed, owned and led and built in consultation with all relevant stakeholders at the national level, as appropriate. Member States, especially those that suffer from food insecurity, must make food security and nutrition a high priority and reflect this in their national programmes and budgets.

[25] See www.worldwewant2015.org/food2015.

68. Hunger and food security were the focus of high-level meetings held in 2013 in Addis Ababa, Brussels, Dublin, London, Madrid, Paris and Washington, D.C. Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector made specific commitments to eradicating hunger at those meetings, with pledges exceeding $25 billion made at the "Nutrition for Growth" high-level event held in London preceding the meeting of the Group of Eight. The Group of Eight, in the Lough Erne communiqué, renewed support for the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program to finance country-owned agricultural development activities, especially those that achieve positive nutrition outcomes, and to leverage greater flows of private capital for smallholder farmers and agribusinesses in low-income countries.

69. International collaboration is key in sharing knowledge and experience, innovation, capacity-building, financing and inclusive and equitable governance of markets and common resources. At all levels, there is a need for multi-stakeholder partnerships, bringing together the full range of actors, in particular small producers and their organizations, to tackle shared priorities around food security and nutrition. This requires joint efforts in a spirit of partnership, supported by principles of equity, inclusion and sustainability and underpinned by good governance and mutual accountability. Public and private investment in food systems needs to strengthen the investment capacity of small producers, improve their access to financial and productive resources and facilitate their access to markets, technology and knowledge.

70. While it is widely agreed that a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system will promote agriculture and rural development in developing countries and support the achievement of food security objectives, a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Round as a whole appears elusive in the near future. In line with the mandate of the eighth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization and in the run-up to the ninth Conference, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2013, member States are engaged in advancing negotiations in those areas where progress can be achieved before the full conclusion of the Round. In this context, a proposal on food stockholding and food aid from the Group of 33 developing countries has generated productive discussions in the agriculture negotiating group ahead of the upcoming Conference.

71. Some elements of potential convergence have begun to emerge. However, major differences remain on some of the core issues: while the objective is food security, the main stumbling blocks of the proposal centre on provisions that would allow the Governments of developing countries to buy food at prices set by them, with the objective of stocking it for food security purposes or distributing it as food aid without having to count it as trade-distorting support, which is subject to limits. Other countries question the extent to which this is a problem for most developing countries. Two additional proposals from the Group of 20 developing countries focus on (a) tariff quota administration and (b) export subsidies and related issues grouped together as "export competition", prescribing a first step towards eliminating export subsidies and disciplining export credit to reduce the chances of it being subsidized.[26]

[26] See www.wto.org/english/news_e/news13_e/agng_23may13_e.htm.

VI. Way forward

A. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

72. As efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 intensify in the coming year, support for developing countries that are lagging behind will need to target the underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition, recognizing the interlinkages among the dimensions of sustainable agriculture and increased productivity, gender equality, poverty, unemployment, infrastructure, health and well-being, good governance and political will that drive the development process. Indeed, strong interdependencies exist between food security and nutrition and many other targets of the Goals, including those relating to maternal and child health, education, gender and poverty. The special event on the Goals to be held during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly in September 2013 will be an occasion to advocate accelerating progress on the Goals and ensuring that more commitments are solicited for initiatives to fast-track them.

B. Sustainable development goals and food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture

73. Discussions during the third session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals in May 2013 energetically tackled the issues surrounding food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture and recognized inherent interlinkages with poverty eradication, water security, drought, desertification and land degradation, in addition to many other areas that will eventually be woven into a narrative and captured within the sustainable development goals and their associated targets and indicators.

74. During this meeting, a number of Member States and major groups welcomed the Zero Hunger Challenge and expressed their support for a vision of a world without hunger and malnutrition in all its forms, especially child stunting, and where agriculture and food systems are sustainable and contribute to eradicating rural poverty through the inclusion of women and men smallholders, rural workers and the landless.

75. The Open Working Group generally supported the need for a holistic, integrated and inclusive approach to sustainable development that promotes sustainable agriculture and food systems. The question is how to conceptualize a possible goal for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture within the sustainable development goals that is concise, universal in nature and applicable at the national level, which demands a holistic vision of the challenges at hand.

76. There is an emerging consensus within the international community that actions along multiple dimensions are required to ensure food security. These include actions to ensure food availability, access, stability, consumption and utilization;[27] improve health and sanitation; recognize the critical interlinkages between food security, water, energy and climate change; and invest in sustainable agriculture and rural development. Acting comprehensively on these dimensions is

[27] Utilization is commonly understood as the way in which the body makes the most of various nutrients in food.

essential to ensure that linkages between food security and nutrition and different parts of the agenda on sustainable development goals are addressed. Such multidimensionality and linkages may be addressed through the formulation of an overall sustainable development goal, through targets under related goals, through the inclusion of nutrition-sensitive indicators relating to different targets and through the promotion of nutrition-sensitive approaches and strategies to implement the sustainable development goals.

77. Multidimensionality and complexity suggest the need to capture both food security and nutrition outcomes and their enablers (e.g. linkages to sustainable agriculture, rural development, rural-urban linkages, infrastructure, education, water, health, decent jobs, social protection, the empowerment of women and gender equality). They also signal the need to promote a holistic notion of food systems, including all food-related activities (producing, storing, processing, packaging, trading and consuming food), and acknowledge the challenges confronting different food systems in the current global environment. Such an approach will also require improved mechanisms for due diligence and significant efforts to coordinate and monitor the impact of many new initiatives.

78. A possible goal for achieving food and nutrition security through sustainable agriculture and food systems might include targets to minimize food waste and post-harvest losses; increase productivity and income for smallholder and women farmers; achieve a transformation to sustainable agriculture; and end malnutrition and ensure the right to food.[28]

C. Agriculture development and food security in the development agenda beyond 2015

79. The recent report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda suggested that a goal of ensuring food security and good nutrition could be considered by the Open Working Group. Such a goal might include targets of ending hunger and protecting the right of everyone to have access to sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious food; reducing stunting, wasting and anaemia for all children under 5 years of age; increasing agricultural productivity with a focus on sustainably increasing smallholder yields and ensuring access to irrigation; adopting sustainable agricultural, ocean and freshwater fishery practices and rebuilding designated fish stocks to sustainable levels; and reducing post-harvest loss and food waste (A/67/890, annex).

80. As part of the consultation process beyond 2015, FAO and WFP launched a global thematic consultation on hunger, food security and nutrition, together with IFAD and Biodiversity International, with the support of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition and a wide range of contributing agencies and partners, including civil society and the private sector. The consultation process, which was hosted by the Governments of Spain and Colombia, began with online discussions hosted by the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition from November 2012 to January 2013, then convened an

[28] See the Co-Chair's summary of the third session of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, May 2013. Available from http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1630.

informal consultation with stakeholders of the Committee on World Food Security in February 2013 and concluded with the high-level consultation in Madrid in April 2013.

81. The high-level consultation produced a global vision and building blocks for ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition that have informed the development framework beyond 2015, drawing on the main inputs and recommendations from the consultation process and garnering strategic and political commitment from participants to support the vision, globally raise awareness and take the lead on issues of hunger, food security and nutrition in the negotiations on the agenda beyond 2015.[29]

82. To end hunger and malnutrition, it will be important to accord priority to increasing resilience in agriculture and food systems by building healthy and dynamic ecosystems that are better able to cope with and respond to climate change, extreme weather events, emerging diseases, shifts in population patterns and economic disruption and shocks. The extent to which the poor will benefit from economic growth depends on initial levels of inequality, the extent to which growth generates employment for the poor and the sector of the economy in which growth occurs. Agricultural growth led by smallholders, especially women, will be most effective in reducing extreme poverty and hunger when it increases returns to labour and generates employment for rural people living in poverty.[30]

83. To achieve sustainable agriculture development and food security, all those who are able to should direct their efforts toward investing in critical agents: the women and men small producers and their organizations, fisherfolk, livestock keepers, forest users, rural workers, rural entrepreneurs and indigenous peoples, who will underpin the degree of success of the development agenda beyond 2015.

[29] See www.worldwewant2015.org/food2015.

[30] FAO, WFP and IFAD, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012*.